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Testimony: **H.B. No. 5053 An Act Increasing Access to  
Overdose Reversal Drugs**

February 16, 2016

Good Morning: Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and esteemed members of the Public Health Committee.

I want to thank-you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Connecticut Nurses' Association (CNA). I am Mary Jane Williams Ph.D., RN current chairperson of Government Relations Committee for the Connecticut Nurses Association. I speak in strong support of **H.B. No. 5053 An Act Increasing Access to Overdose Reversal Drugs.**

**The Issue at a Glance:**

The abuse of and addiction to opioids is a serious and challenging public health problem. Deaths from drug overdose have risen steadily over the past two decades and have become the leading cause of injury death in the United States. Prescription drugs, especially opioid analgesics—a class of prescription drugs such as hydrocodone, oxycodone, morphine, and methadone used to treat both acute and chronic pain — have increasingly been implicated in drug overdose deaths over the last decade. From 1999 to 2013, the rate for drug poisoning deaths involving opioid analgesics nearly quadrupled. Deaths related to heroin have also increased sharply

since 2010, with a 39 percent increase between 2012 and 2013. Given these alarming trends, it is time for a smart and sustainable response to prevent opioid abuse and overdose and treat people with opioid use disorder. (Cited in ASPE Issue Brief, DHHS, 1915)

This legislation is a response to the dramatic increase in Mortality related to Opioid overdose. It is a beginning but it must be combined with

- Prescription Drug Monitoring
- Medication Assisted Treatment
- Opioid Prescribing Practices
- Examination of Outcomes utilizing Evidence Based Research
- Improvement in Monitoring and Prescribing Practices

I have included the source of the information for your review. This is a complex, multifaceted problem that will not be adequately addressed by one change in practice. If Connecticut is serious about addressing the issue we must all be proactive in our actions. The proposed legislation is a step in the right direction.

Therefore I urge you to support **Governor's Bill No. 5053 An Act Increasing Access to Overdose Reversal Drugs.**

Thank you

Mary Jane M. Williams PhD., RN

Chair, Government Relation, Connecticut Nurses Association

Professor Emeritus Central Connecticut State University